



Notes from the Director No. 27

28 August 1978

PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT

I want to express my sincere gratitude to the many who assisted in making President Carter's visit on August 16th such an outstanding success. Just as I take pride in you, we can all take pride in the President's message, which speaks for itself:

Admiral Turner and distinguished leaders, members of the Central Intelligence Agency. It's a pleasure for me to be out here to meet with you and to express again my feelings about our nation and about what you do to protect it and to make it even greater than it already is.

A year and a half ago, I was here for my first visit at the time of the swearing-in ceremony of the Director, Admiral Stan Turner. I've told many groups that one of the most pleasant surprises that I have had as President of our country has been the quality of work done by the Central Intelligence Agency. And I want to thank you for that.

You've made my job easier. The decisions that I must make on a daily basis require objective and accurate unbiased analyses of very complicated issues. It's difficult for someone in my position to distinguish between the appearance of things and the actual facts, the reality of them. And you do a superb job in trying to bring to me and others who make opinions and then make decisions about what our nation should do in the pursuit of our own goals and purposes, in the enhancement of our own ideals and principles.

In the last number of years, the purpose of the CIA has been changing. Your assignment is different now from what it was. There was a time not too long ago when your almost unique responsibility was to assess the activities and the potential activities of the Soviet Union. That obviously is still one of the important assignments that you have. But now your duties extend to the analysis of almost every region of the world, almost every country on earth. Our close allies and friends, we need to understand their special problems, their special opportunities, how we can work better with them, the attitude of their people; to study food production, agriculture, forestry, economics, mining, labor. A very, very complicated, very diverse analysis problem for you all.

I know the heroism demonstrated by many of you. Nathan Hale, who is recognized here and who died, I believe, 202 years ago, said, "My only regret is that I have but one life to give for my country."

Behind me in the foyer are commemorated 35 agents of the CIA who've given their lives for the service of our country, not adequately recognized for heroism, some not even recognized by name; 17 of them, their names not even known, or revealed, because they lost their lives for our country in clandestine operations.

But all of you represent the attitude and the commitment, the willingness to sacrifice, the patriotism of those who gave the supreme sacrifice.

I think the relations between the CIA and the American public have been substantially improved in recent months. The relationship between the CIA and the Congress has been substantially improved in recent months.

Some who've been here for many, many years have had an inclination to be concerned about the increased openness, the willingness of Stan Turner and myself to let the American people know who you are, what you do, some aspects of your work which don't violate the security of our country. There is a growing appreciation for what this agency does, what you individually do for our nation.

But there is a conflict with which you need to help me, and that is the balancing between legitimate openness, which enhances your work and protects the interests of our country, on the one hand, and the careful preservation of security, the non-revelation of secrets which you hold which can be very damaging to our nation if revealed. It takes intelligence, it takes sound judgment, it takes common sense to draw that distinction. But those are characteristics which you exhibit very well every day.

I'd like to say in closing that I appreciate what you are, what you do: the high professionalism, training, education, experience that you bring to your job and which you demonstrate every day with your good work; the honesty and integrity that you present to me and to your other superiors, to the Congress, to the public for critical examination. You almost are in the position of being like Caesar's wife. You have to be even more pure and more clean and more decent and more honest than almost any persons who serve in government, because the slightest mistake on your part is highly publicized and greatly magnified, whereas your great achievements and successes quite often are not publicized and are not recognized, and certainly are never exaggerated.

I'm glad that we have this partnership.

There is now a stability in the CIA, which has been brought by Admiral Turner and joined by Frank Carlucci, that I hope will permeate your lives for many months, many years to come. There have been too many shocks, too many rapid changes in the past. But the policies that have now been established by Executive Order, by sound decisions, by cooperation, and in the future by law will give you a much surer sense of what the future will bring, will liberate you individually, in effect, to make your own beneficial impact in our country be even greater.

I know how serious uncertainty is in a person's life.



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